

REPUBLICANS HAVE A BETTER IDEA

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I guess it is true what they say about old dogs. No matter how hard we try sometimes, we just cannot teach them new tricks. So when we try to stop the people who have been raiding the Social Security Trust Fund from doing it any more, well, that is a lot easier said than done. See, they have been using this money to fund big government programs, and if we tell them they have got to find one penny out of every Federal dollar to preserve Social Security for America's retirees, that is a pretty tough trick for them.

The comments of the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) tell us just how hard a time the Democrats are having learning it when he says that we should spend as little of the Social Security surplus as possible. What he is really saying is let us spend as much of the Social Security surplus as we want on the Federal bureaucracy, and if there happens to be any money left, heck, we may as well give it back to the people it belongs to.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans have a better idea: stop the raid first. Strengthening retirement security must be a top priority, not an afterthought.

FIGHT FOR OUR SCHOOLS

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is our sacred responsibility to make sure that all of our children have an equal opportunity to learn. But today I rise to express my deep concern that the Republican leadership does not share this commitment. While Democrats have been working night and day to improve education, to put more teachers in our schools and to reduce class sizes, the Republican leadership have been trying to take money out of the schools and away from the majority of this country's children.

The Republican plan is not just. The Republican plan is not right. We should be building up our schools, not knocking them down. For the sake of our children, all of our children, we must fight for our schools.

PRESIDENT SENDS PLAN ON SOCIAL SECURITY TO HOUSE

(Mr. OSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for giving me an oppor-

tunity to stand before the forum this morning and express my appreciation.

□ 1030

For a number of days, I have been in the well seeking the President's plan on Social Security, and I have, for 29 days, been tracking the fact that, until yesterday afternoon, the President had not delivered a plan.

While I am pleased to say that we have received a plan, it did just come in yesterday afternoon, it is a very lengthy plan, it is filled with many however's, and whereases, and therefore's, and thereases, and I am working my way through it. But I did want to stand and express my appreciation to the administration, Mr. Speaker, for having forwarded the plan and to say that we will be reviewing it.

I hope it gets a fair hearing, and I am looking forward to the dialogue as to the adequacy of the plan. So with that, Mr. Speaker, this placard is no longer operative. Again, I thank the administration for finally forwarding their plan.

SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, last night the President sent Congress his legislative proposal, entitled Strengthen Social Security and Medicare Act of 1999.

The President's plan would devote the entire Social Security surpluses to debt reduction, extend the solvency of Social Security to 2050, and establish a Medicare surplus reserve equal to one-third of any on-budget surpluses for the period of fiscal years 2002 through 2009 to strengthen and modernize Medicare.

I want to stress to my colleagues the urgency in discussing and reaching a fair compromise on this proposal. If we do not, our constituents will suffer and be caught in the middle of a partisan battle, and I am very concerned.

In New York, Social Security benefits 2.3 million people who are retired workers, disabled workers, widows and widowers, wives and husbands, and over 247,000 children in New York receive Social Security benefits. In my district, in southeastern Queens, 74,579 people receive Social Security benefits, of which 9,000 of these individuals are children.

We must preserve Social Security so that our constituents will have a decent quality of life.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let's go Yankees.

CBO SAYS REPUBLICANS' PLAN DOES NOT SPEND SOCIAL SECURITY SURPLUS

(Mr. HERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle are continuing to claim that the Republican Congress' spending plan takes from the Social Security Trust Fund. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth.

The problem with the Democrat claim is that it is based on spending assumptions that have never materialized. They simply do not exist.

Let me share with the House an updated letter, dated September 30, 1999, from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. It says, "CBO estimates that the Republicans' spending plan will not use any of the projected Social Security surpluses in fiscal year 2000."

The facts are clear, this Republican Congress is not and will not spend the Social Security surplus.

STATE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

(Mr. CROWLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, Senator George Mitchell resumes talks today with pro Good Friday Agreement political leaders from Northern Ireland.

Since the Good Friday Agreement was signed on April 10, 1998, we have seen some progress towards a lasting peace in Northern Ireland. The Patten Commission has issued its report on Policing in Northern Ireland and the cease-fire has remained intact.

Despite these positive events, the agreement's foes have consistently sought to delay and derail implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, particularly David Trimble, the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party.

The most recent effort to derail the peace process centers around the debate on decommissioning. Even though the Good Friday Agreement contains no provision that the IRA begin decommissioning before Sinn Fein can take its place on the Executive Committee, First Minister and UUP leader David Trimble has linked the two issues together in clear violation of the Good Friday Agreement.

In the words of Mr. Adams, the Unionists need to "get real" and enter into the power-sharing executive as called for under the agreement. And Britain's new Secretary for Northern Ireland, Peter Mandelson, has warned politicians, and I quote "the people of Northern Ireland will not forgive them if they put barriers in the way of permanent peace."

Mr. Speaker, if the Good Friday Agreement should fail, it may prove disastrous for the peace process because there is no alternative.

It is a dangerous game the Unionists are playing with real lives at stake. It is my hope, and that of so many Irish